



LEAD1
ASSOCIATION

GUIDE TO SPORT SUPERVISION

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INTRODUCTION

Dear Colleague:

When the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, “Sarbox,” passed in 2002 in response to several financial scandals at the time, I was the CEO of a public company. I began having to attest yearly to the Securities Exchange Commission (SEC) that our company was in compliance with internal accounting controls. If I was wrong, I could face fines of up to \$5 million and jail time of up to 20 years. Believe me—I made sure we were in full compliance. A whole cottage industry was created after Sarbox, teaching companies how to be compliant. A book, *Sarbanes-Oxley for Dummies*, became a big seller.

Similarly, the NCAA recently adopted legislation that will increase the accountability of presidents, chancellors, athletics department staff, and coaches, requiring them to demonstrate annually that they are in compliance with NCAA rules and regulations.

College athletics departments today are big complicated enterprises and face many risks. Presidents and chancellors are responsible, ultimately, but athletics directors carry the burden of the day-to-day operations.

We at LEAD1 are focused on helping our member schools manage these risks, by outlining best practices for how athletics staff should manage a specific sport.

In the spirit of institutional accountability, we hope this guide will provide a framework for structuring the role of the sport supervisor.

Sincerely ,

Tom McMillen
President & CEO
LEAD1 Association

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OVERVIEW

The *LEAD1 Guide to Sport Supervision* outlines a wide-range of fundamental responsibilities for the sport supervisor. While no single policy or practice offers a silver bullet, this guide provides an opportunity for sport supervisors to assess and develop their roles as a sport supervisor.

This guide is not all-inclusive and is not intended to serve as an instructional manual. Users should always consult with the appropriate individual(s) at their institution to ensure compliance with federal, state, university, and athletic department policies and procedures.

What is a sport supervisor?

A sport supervisor is the central party through which the operation and activities of each sport flows. This oversight role includes meeting regularly with the head coach and interacting with assistant coaches, student-athletes, and administrative support staff. The sport supervisor is often responsible for helping enforce the many rules and regulations in college athletics, especially those designed to protect student-athletes.

Why was this guide developed?

At the request of LEAD1 members and in light of the numerous incidents which have harmed the reputation of many institutions, this guide was developed to assist athletics departments with assessing the strengths and vulnerabilities of their current sport supervision model. Sport supervision has been described as a “sink or swim” experience by both new and veteran sport supervisors.

Special Acknowledgments

The LEAD1 Guide to Sport Supervision combines collaborative work and insight from former and current athletics directors and sport supervisors from the following institutions: Baylor University, University of Colorado, Hofstra University, University of Missouri, University of Nevada, Tulane University, Wake Forest University, and West Virginia University.

UNDERSTANDING INSTITUTIONAL EXPECTATIONS

A critical first step in performing the job of a sport supervisor is having a thorough understanding of the athletics departments culture and expectations, as well as fully understanding the needs of student-athletes. By understanding the internal issues and expectations of the athletics department both on and off the field, sport supervisors can effectively respond to critical issues that may arise.

Athletics Department Culture. It is important for sport supervisors to fully understand the expectations of the athletics department with respect to issues both on and off the field. A sport supervisor should:

- Fully understand university and athletics director expectations
- Encourage support from the athletics director to promote coach accountability
- Communicate and collaborate with all supporting administrative units
- Foster professional development for coaches

Organization and Structure. Sport supervision responsibility is often an additional duty assigned to an individual. This supervisory responsibility usually has minimal relation to the individual's daily job. It is therefore critically important that sport supervisors ask questions and communicate with athletics department senior leaders to address important issues. The sport supervisor should:

- Ensure that:
 - A manual detailing sport supervision policies and procedures exists
 - A sport supervision job description is in place
 - Senior athletics department leaders provide relevant training and mentoring
- Schedule meetings with all sport supervisors to share best practices

Student-Athlete Experience. The sport supervisor has oversight responsibility of the overall student-athlete intercollegiate athletics and academic experience. It is therefore important for sports supervisors to create opportunities for student-athlete feedback. A sport supervisor should:

- Always be accessible to student-athletes
- Meet with the team each semester/quarter to touch base
- Ensure student-athletes are supported to achieve academic success
- Be involved in the required NCAA exit interview process
- Meet with student-athletes who are graduating, transferring or quitting the team
- Spot-check scheduled team activities as recorded on the NCAA-required time management plan

Student-Athlete Health and Wellness. Student-athletes face many unique challenges, which affect their overall well-being. The area of greatest concern is the health care provided to student-athletes. A sport supervisor should:

- Ensure that student-athletes receive the best health care possible
- Monitor the physical and mental well-being of student-athletes
- Meet with the head coach and athletic trainer on return-to-play treatment plans
- Know what medical information can be released under federal privacy laws and university policy





UNDERSTANDING INSTITUTIONAL EXPECTATIONS (CONT.)

Championship Hosting. Serving as the host site for a postseason conference and/or NCAA championship is a significant commitment. Sport supervisors should:

- Consider whether hosting can contribute to the team's competitive success
- Assess budget and personnel capacity
- Identify potential event conflicts (e.g., parking and traffic, hotel availability)

KNOWING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Federal and State Laws. Sport supervisors should have a general understanding of applicable federal and state laws such as the Clery Act, which encourages the reporting of accurate campus crime data, and important Title IX regulations applicable to sexual misconduct. For example, with respect to *the Clery Act*, a sport supervisor should:

- Understand what the law entails and where responsibilities lie
- Receive a current list of all Campus Security Authorities (CSAs), organized by sport and job title
- Routinely remind CSAs of their reporting obligations

With respect to *sexual misconduct*, a sport supervisor should:

- Encourage student-athletes, coaches, and administrative staff to promptly report issues, including possible discriminatory retaliation concerns
- Ensure that student-athletes, coaches and administrative staff receive annual training

University Policies. Policies and procedures in a workplace help reinforce and clarify the standards expected of employees. Policies and procedures are only useful if they are properly implemented and monitored. It is the responsibility of the sport supervisor to have an understanding of all applicable university policies, including the following:

- Student Code of Conduct - policies related to academic dishonesty, sexual misconduct, civil rights misconduct, residential misconduct, all facets of student life from admission to graduation
- Business Practices - policies related to purchasing, travel, and other financial functions
- Facilities and Safety - policies related to safety codes, buildings, and health standards
- Fundraising - policies related to development activities and receipt of cash or other gifts
- Human Resources - policies, rules, and contracts related to university employment
- Information Technology - policies related to computer systems, access, data, and related issues
- Responsible Employee Reporting - policies related to reporting sexual misconduct, civil rights misconduct, Clery Act reporting, and other related reporting
- Open Records – policies for maintaining and releasing information

Athletics Department Policies. It is the responsibility of the sport supervisor to have an understanding of all applicable athletic department policies, including a working knowledge of the following:

- NCAA compliance policies and procedures
- Missed class time policies
- Drug testing and substance abuse policies
- Student-Athlete Handbook policies
- Team travel policies
- Emergency Action Plans (EAPs), including detailed plan for catastrophic scenarios
- Athletic Department policies and procedures
- Minors on campus policies (e.g., camps, recruiting visits)





KNOWING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (CONT.)

NCAA and Conference Rules. It is important for the sport supervisor to assist athletics department compliance staff with adhering to conference and NCAA rules. The sport supervisor should:

- Ensure the attendance of coaches at all-rules education sessions
- Monitor the timeliness of compliance form completion
- Receive copies of NCAA and conference reported rules violations
- Obtain on-campus recruiting visit itineraries, including entertainment activities
- Monitor playing and practice activities (e.g., coaching and non-coaching personnel, daily/weekly practice limits, mandatory/voluntary practice, required days off)
- Approve National Letters of Intent (NLIs) and scholarship offers

WORKING WITH HEAD COACHES

Communication and Engagement. It is critically important for sport supervisors to collaborate with head coaches in order to effectively:

- Enforce all policies and procedures
- Conduct weekly in-person meetings with the head coach
- Participate in all sport-specific program meetings (e.g., academics, budget, compliance, facilities, marketing) with the head coach
- Set sport program goals and expectations
- Know the head coach's recruiting plans
- Ask questions related to the character of highly recruited student-athletes (e.g., academics, citizenship, disciplinary records)
- Conduct annual head coach performance evaluations under the procedures authorized by the university
- Frequently attend team and individual practices and strength and conditioning activities (at least on a weekly basis)

Disciplinary Measures. Head coaches are generally provided the autonomy to render student-athlete disciplinary measures. Such measures may be the result of missing practice, missing class, or other behavior that is contrary to team expectations. A sport supervisor should:

- Address student-athlete behavior or conflict issues during the standing meetings of sport supervisor and head coach
- Discuss significant punitive measures prior to the head coach rendering action
- Review the team policy manual to ensure a decision or action is not in conflict with university and athletic department policies

Game Agreements. Sport supervisors should have a clear understanding of the head coach's game scheduling philosophy. A sport supervisor should:

- Discuss scheduling plans with the head coach
- Know the philosophy regarding game guarantees and other standard provisions
- Approve all regular season game contracts, including foreign tour contracts
- Identify and communicate how scheduling impacts the team's RPI, missed class time, and budget





WORKING WITH HEAD COACHES (CONT.)

Coaching Contracts. Written contracts have become a far more complex process for sport supervisors and coaches due to the growing financial commitments involved. A sport supervisor should:

- Understand the process with respect to coaches' contracts
- Obtain copies of the head coach and assistant coaches' contracts (or letters of appointments)

Sportsmanship. Exhibiting respect, fairness, and civility are expected behaviors associated with athletics participation. To foster a positive competitive environment for student-athletes, coaches, officials, and fans, the sport supervisor should:

- Understand the process for reviewing incidents and rendering disciplinary action
- Reinforce institutional, conference, and NCAA expectations
- Document incidents involving violations

Fiscal Accountability. The sport supervisor enhances fiscal accountability by providing proper financial oversight and alignment with the athletic department's financial resources, capital projects, and sport program goals. The sport supervisor should:

- Collaborate with the head coach in the budget process
- Identify fundraising priorities, activities, and donor cultivation plans
- Receive monthly budget reports
- Obtain capital project and facilities master plans
- Retain a record of all significant equipment purchase and service agreements

Outside Consultants. Coaches frequently secure outside consultants (e.g., sports psychologists, team building facilitators, motivational speakers) for noncoaching-related activities. For safety reasons, sport supervisors need to frequently monitor who is working with student-athletes in this capacity. A sport supervisor should:

- Participate in all independent contractor solicitations
- Apply applicable background checks and credential verification
- Ensure outside consultants do not engage in coaching activities

MANAGING CRISIS AND COMMUNICATION

Managing Allegations. Conflict within a sport program is inevitable. Efficient conflict resolution is key to program accountability. A sport supervisor should:

- Develop a parent management plan to address issues raised
- Implement a management plan for investigating allegations (e.g., mistreatment, rules, sportsmanship)
- Consult with the athletics director on appropriate sanctions
- Maintain written records of all allegations and review outcomes

Communication Plans and Protocols. It is important for sport supervisors to obtain training on athletics department crisis protocol and communication plans. Training areas include, but are not limited to:

- University policy violations
- Workplace conflict management
- Moral behavior and rules violations
- Legal violations and criminal acts
- Title IX violations
- Team emergencies (e.g., transportation, health and safety)

Emergency Action Plans. Sport supervisors serve a critical role for addressing incidents that may threaten the health and welfare of student-athletes, staff, fans, or cause potential harm to the reputation of the university. The sport supervisor can mitigate the risks of an emergency situation:

- Have all important telephone numbers for emergency situations
- Conduct a walk-through with the sports medicine and game management staff to review Emergency Action Plans (EAPs), emergency equipment, and emergency services
- Obtain travel authorization forms, including travel roster and itineraries
- Identify alternative practice or competition venue options

Overseeing Game Day Activities. The sport supervisor needs to ensure both home and visiting teams compete in a safe environment. The sport supervisor should:

- Have all emergency contact and game operations staff telephone numbers on hand
- Review visiting team accommodations (e.g., provision of health care services when team does not travel with primary athletics health care provider, training room/practice/locker room access)
- Review the post-event report and help address identified concerns



SUGGESTED AREAS OF OVERSIGHT

Academics and Student Development

- Admissions
- At-Risk students
- Practice and competitions during reading period, final exams
- Academic Performance Rates (APR)
- Graduation Success Rates (GSR)
- Academic support
- Career and life skills

Budget

- Equipment
- Fundraising
- Recruiting
- Travel
- Expense reimbursements

Competitive Excellence

- Scheduling philosophy
- Recruiting plans, prospect profiles
- Inclement weather and game decisions
- Make-up game determination
- Hosting postseason championships
- Home football game impact on other team schedules

Compliance

- NCAA and conference rules and regulations
- University and athletics department policies
- State and federal laws, including Title IX and the Clery Act
- Gender equity plan

Contracts

- Head coach and assistant coaches
- Outside consultants
- Equipment and software
- Game agreements
- Outside income

Facilities

- Capital projects
- Master plan
- Alternative site options
- Visiting teams
- Safety and security

Financial Aid

- Reduction or cancellation
- Exhausted (noncounter) aid
- Post-eligible aid
- Voluntary withdrawal

Marketing

- Fan Experience
- Student-athlete experience
- Game attendance
- Signature games

Roster Management

- NCAA squad list
- Roster limits for Title IX compliance
- Male practice players on women's team
- Student-athlete survey completion and review
- Senior and transfer exit interviews
- SAAC representatives



SUGGESTED AREAS OF OVERSIGHT (CONT.)

Sports Medicine and Sports Performance

- Independent medical care
- Return to play
- Mental health
- Emergency response plans
- Strength and conditioning activities
- Nutritional supplements

Student-Athlete Conduct

- Hazing
- Sports wagering
- Drug testing
- Team rules
- Student-Athlete Handbook
- University student code of conduct

Travel

- Missed class time and excused absences
- Modes of transportation, regular-season and post-season
- Travel itineraries and travel roster, including guests
- Flight cancellation and re-booking
- Overnight room assignment policies
- Permissible/non-permissible expenses
- Student-athlete alternative travel
- Emergency response plans
- Travel advisories issued by government agency

